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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

The efficiency of state school systems.—Perhaps the fundamental value of statistical treatment is to reduce detailed facts to a few significant and comparable terms. In *An Index Number for State School Systems*,¹ Dr. Ayres finds a single number which expresses the average of “10 different measures of the diffusion, the quantity, and the quality of the public education received by the children” of the several states. Clearly such an index will serve a real purpose in facilitating comparisons of the states and studies of progress over periods of years.

The ten measures averaged into the index are: (1) the per cent of school population attending school daily; (2) average days attended by each child of school age; (3) average number of days schools were kept open; (4) per cent that high-school attendance was of total attendance; (5) per cent that boys were of girls in high schools; (6) average annual expenditure per child attending; (7) average annual expenditure per child of school age; (8) average annual expenditure per teacher employed; (9) expenditure per pupil for purposes other than teachers' salaries; and (10) expenditure per teacher for salaries.

The basis of selection is indicated as follows: “The purpose has been to use as component elements all the series of measures that were available in substantially uniform and reliable records for the entire period of 47 years, that were in general as fair to each state as to each other state, and that were of such a nature that increases in them reflected improved educational conditions, and decreases in them reflected poorer educational conditions.” It is further emphasized that the methods employed “to bring each item into comparability with a common theoretical standard of 100” serve that purpose only and “are not methods of weighting as that term is usually employed. They do not depend on arbitrary judgments or computed ratios as to the comparative degrees of importance that ought to be attached to the several items.”

The publication includes tables giving the index numbers of the several states for the census years since 1890 and for 1918, the resulting ranks of the states at the several periods, the correlation between the several items and the final index, and the correlation between the average of the five items that are based on attendance and the average of the five that are based on expenditure.

¹ LEONARD P. AYRES, *An Index Number for State School Systems*. New York: Department of Education, Russell Sage Foundation, 1920. Pp. 70.